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The image shows the front cover of a book. The spine is made of a solid brown material. The main part of the cover is decorated with marbled paper. The marbling pattern consists of a dark, almost black background with a network of thin, branching red lines. Scattered throughout this network are numerous small, light-colored (cream or off-white) spots and blotches. In the bottom left corner, there is a small, rectangular, light-colored paper label with handwritten text.

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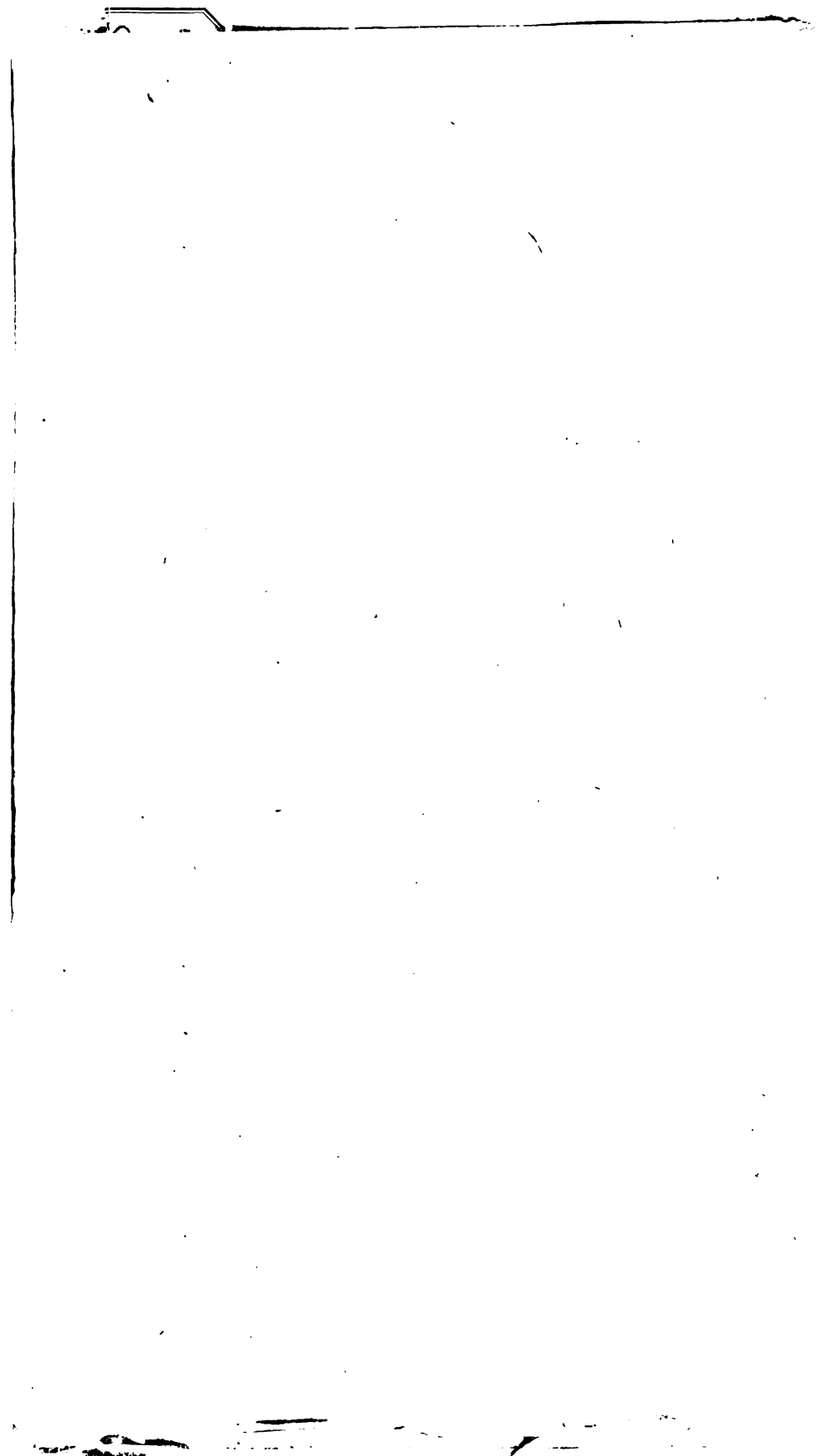
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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED

AT THE EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

The Massachusetts Peace Society,

DEC. 25, 1823.

BY TYLER BIGELOW, ESQ.

BOSTON :

PRINTED BY JOHN B. RUSSELL.

1824.

*At a meeting of the Massachusetts Peace Society,
after the anniversary celebration, on the evening
of Christmas-day, December 25, 1823;*

*VOTED, that the thanks of this Society be given to
TYLER BIGELOW, Esq. for his ingenious and elo-
quent Address, and that he be requested to furnish
a copy for publication ; and that John Tappan,
Esq. Rev. Mr Dwight, and Alden Bradford, Esq.
be a committee to communicate this Vote.*

From the Records,

T. M. HARRIS, Rec. Sec'ry.

ADDRESS.

IN looking over the history of Man, there appears to be no enormity, of which he has been guilty, so great and so appalling, as that of public war. If all the other evils which have afflicted the race, both natural and moral, could be brought together and placed in array, they would fall far short, both in amount and severity, of those which have flowed from this productive and yet producing cause. One of the first philosophers, statesmen, and orators of the last age, in making as accurate an estimate as the nature of the case admits, observes,—“I think the numbers of men now upon earth are computed at five hundred millions, at the most; and the slaughter of mankind, by means of war, upon the smallest calculation, amounts to seventy times the number of souls this day on the globe.”* And yet we can state this fact, and hear it stated, with quite as much stoicism, as we could hear of a shipwreck on our coasts, or the death of an individual by the hand of violence. There seems to be something in the evils of war too large in amount, too intense in

* Burke's works, vol. i. p. 20.

degree, to permit the mind to take a close or long continued survey ; it sees "aliquid immensum infinitumque," and turns aside with a feeling of disgust, hopelessness, and despair. Nevertheless, it is even now said "that war is a calamity, the recurrence of which, no human foresight or exertions can prevent."† But it is difficult to conceive that an act originating in the exercise of the will of man, cannot be prevented by him. To those, at least, who believe that he is a moral agent,—that his conduct is decided by motives presented to his understanding and will,—the opinion that he cannot avoid war, is no less absurd than the opinion that he cannot avoid theft, robbery, or murder. The commission of one crime depends upon the same principles in the nature of man, as the commission of another. Every offence is the effect of temptation upon his bad appetites and passions. The difference consists only in the magnitude of the transgression.

On what principle in the nature or condition of man, does the advocate for war found its necessity? He has been defined to be a religious animal. But who will find the cause or the necessity of wars in man's religion? Every relation he sustains with his Creator—every light in which he can be viewed, as connected with his final Judge, leads to an opposite conclusion. He is a reasonable being. Wars are inseparably connected with the highest acts of ingratitude, revenge, cruelty, and crime. Apply the epithet

† Wheaton's discourse before the New York Hist. Society, Dec. 1820.

reasonable to these acts, and you have a string of solecisms. Still, however, it is repeated, "no human foresight or exertions can prevent wars." They are then founded on *necessity*. But man is also a moral agent, and acts not from necessity. Evil is in the world ; but it is here as the test of virtue. War is the greatest of evils ; but it is among the moral evils, and therefore subjected to the control of man's will. There is therefore nothing in those faculties and attributes which distinguish men from brutes, from which wars can spring. As little is there in necessity, or the nature of things, calculated to entail the evils of war upon the human race.

The truth is, mankind are misled on this subject, by early instruction,—carried away by numbers,—overwhelmed by the authority of great names,—pressed down by antiquity and by precedent. The mind is subjected by a tissue of deceptions and frauds, practised upon it from infancy. It is taught to gaze with admiration upon the great names which war has made. It is taught to estimate character, genius, talents, courage, virtue, every thing which adorns and enobles, by rules and standards fitted and adjusted to a warlike state of society ;—and thus men acquire what they believe to be almost intuition on this point. War is necessary, because it has been the business of the world,—because it has afforded occupation for one half of the population of the earth in all ages. War is useful, because it has made nearly all the great men that ever lived.—Take away, they exclaim, from the history of the

species, all that appertains to war and conquest, and what an uninteresting, barren, desolate retrospect have we left! Some eminent lawyers and physicians, a few profound divines and learned judges, here and there a great orator—doubtful if they would have been so, but from the excitements growing out of the events of war! Now and then a good poet—questionable even this, if they could not have sung of arms! Thus men think, talk, and declaim; and thus are cheated to believe that wars cannot be prevented. But where is the man who has undertaken by fair and legitimate deduction, from any principles applicable to human conduct, or from the nature of things, to prove that war is necessarily entailed upon the race of man? What moralist has ever come to this result? What writer, upon the nature or history of man, has ever shewn that a love of war is born with him, interwoven in his very nature, instinctive and incorrigible? Can any investigation on this point ever terminate in any more sensible or satisfactory conclusion, than that wars always have existed—therefore they always must exist.

Any view of the subject of public war, which will tend to diminish the number (I will not say of its friends, for it can have none, but) of those who believe it cannot be prevented, will not be unseasonable on this occasion.

A state of peace is that most fitted to be the natural and permanent condition of man.

There are indications that peace will, in fact, universally prevail, and become the condition of mankind at large.

Nature, in her economy, admirably provides for all the exigences which may happen to her productions. She is never at war with herself. Look over her kingdoms; how nicely the various soils are adapted to the different species of plants; how singularly happy the various fruits of the earth are arranged to suit the variety of climates,—all fitted and subjected to the law of re-production. We find no principle of hostility, or mutual self-destruction, at work here. We may observe the same general law in the animal kingdom. It is true, we see one species preying upon another; not, however, in the indulgence of brutal and malignant passions, but in obedience to nature's first law, self-preservation. We see no one tribe pursuing deadly hostilities against another of the same species. That animal, with whose name we associate every savage and ferocious passion, kills but to satisfy the cravings of hunger. From what law, or operation of nature, do men learn the lesson of war? Are we to listen to the old *saw*, that war is to the moral world, what the tempest is to the natural; that because there are volcanoes, hurricanes, whirlwinds, and elemental strife, therefore there must be wars and fightings and social strife? Wherein consists the analogy? Are we, then, creatures who act by impulse, regardless of high and honourable motives and objects? Shall we so easily give up our spirituality; deny that we are the sons of God; and so readily descend into the darkness and wretchedness of materialism? Besides, let us consider this argument for a moment.

It is, that society has a constant tendency to deterioration. That in its tranquil and peaceful state, it generates a multitude of useless and worthless members, who are to be taken off by war; that it produces a plentiful growth of vices, which are to be pruned and cut away by the sword. But, there is no instance on record where this effect of peace upon the social state has been exemplified. The tendency is the other way. Men, well informed and well governed, take an opposite direction. They do not go from bad to worse, but proceed from one improvement to another. The natural progress of society is like that of an individual, who is at peace with himself, and with his fellow men. His circumstances become more and more prosperous and happy. But admit, for a moment, what is contrary to fact, history, and common sense, that peace has this deleterious effect upon the social state; that the noisome scum mantles upon the standing pool. Is war the remedy? Does this remove the scum only, and leave the waters clear, and pure, and wholesome? Do the vile and profligate only fall victims to the diseases of the camp? Do none but the worthless perish in battle? What compensation does war make to society for the thousands on thousands of young, gallant, and noble spirits, who are swept away in its ferocious career?

War removes all those wholesome restraints upon the passions of men, which it is at once the object and boast of civilization to impose. Its tendency is to throw society back into a state of comparative

barbarism. Men are invited, encouraged, nay, commanded to hate their enemies. A whole people are instantly to be viewed in this character; and it becomes not lawful merely, but a duty to sacrifice their property, liberty, and lives. This is the lesson which war teaches! And is it learning and practising lessons like this, that society, like a poisoned and polluted atmosphere, by the violence of the tempest, becomes tranquillized and purified? What is the language of experience on this point? A war ended, and armies disbanded, what does war give back to society? The principles, feelings, and morals, which are discharged from the camp, are brought home into your villages to contaminate, pollute, and poison. Government is besieged by a throng of suppliants, who exhibit their shattered constitutions, maimed limbs, and wounded bodies, as passports to the doors of the treasury. Pension rolls are swelled and multiplied. The revenues of the country (if indeed any are left) must be appropriated to sustain lives painful, destitute, and wretched in themselves, as well as useless to society.—Happy would it be, if the evil stopped here. Happy indeed for society, if the baneful effects of war could be limited to inroads upon the bodies of its agents and victims. But mangled minds, depraved hearts, vitiated appetites, brutalized passions,—on what pension roll shall these be placed? What asylum can society offer to this mass of intellectual disability, but her hospitals? What protection can she offer to herself against this tide of mental depravity, but her penitentiaries?

Another wretched effect of war is to repress industry and enterprise, except that which serves to lay waste the earth, and ministers to the destruction of the human race. The most warlike period of the world was that which succeeded the irruption and final establishment of the northern barbarians over the continent of Europe. Accordingly, we find no period in history so little distinguished for any of the productions of industry. The minds and bodies of men were alike inactive and dead to every employment, save that of war. And it is singular enough that the only trade of the world was with the East, and with a people distinguished alike for their industry and their freedom from wars. Indeed, war, indolence, and barbarism are one family ; and their separation is as unnatural as it is absurd.— Wherever men have existed in a state of complete barbarism, their only business, save that of satisfying the calls of hunger, has been war.

Peace, on the contrary, softens and subdues the passions. Its first teachings are fraternal. Those passions which it cannot subdue by discipline, it seeks to control by legal restraint. It establishes a social compact, which embraces all nations. It brings men together from distant regions, without the weapons of death in their hands, and with the feelings of humanity in their hearts.

[The great and wretched delusion, that war is *necessary*, has derived much support from the promulgation of singular doctrines respecting the origin of society. “The son,” says Montesquieu, “is born by the side of his father, and there he stays. This

is society, and the origin of society." There was too much simplicity and nature in this account of the matter to satisfy the vanity of some philosophers. To account for a condition of things so complicated and happy, as that presented by millions of human beings united under some form of political connexion, seeking to promote the happiness of each and of all, by cultivating the arts of civilization and refinement, it was necessary to resort to something more profound, theoretical, and apparently scientific, than the mere supposition of a social instinct. Accordingly, some began by laying it down as a principle, that men naturally hated each other; and in order to avoid the effect of this principle of hostility,—the total extinction of the race,—they grouped them together, forming them into bands for mutual strength and protection; and thus the principle of hatred originated or led to the principle of association. Hence grew up the fabric of society. This theory, instead of changing or ameliorating the principle of hatred on which it is founded, leaves it in full operation. It but transfers it from the individual to society; and while it contributed to diminish private quarrels, it went to the establishment of public wars.

Others, again, rejecting the principle of mutual hatred, find men, anterior to the origin of society, existing in a solitary, lonely, disconnected state. Oppressed by this individuality of condition, and feeling the necessity of association, they are supposed to have contracted with each other to live together, and to unite their powers, means, and

strength for mutual protection and happiness. Society was considered by these philosophers as wholly artificial,—the mere effect of bargain among individuals existing in a state of natural separation; and the social union was the effect of the *Social Contract*. It is obvious, that this theory mistakes the origin of government for the origin of society.

In some of these affectedly philosophical methods of accounting for the origin of society, war is a *necessary* part of the system itself,—in all of them there is room enough left for its *necessary* existence.

In considering this matter apart from all the proud and vain theories of philosophy, we are led to a more consoling result. The voice of truth, of nature, and religion, teaches us, that wherever there are men, there is society. That man is endowed, by nature, with a social principle, as certainly as he is with a rational principle. That he is no more, by nature or necessity, a hater of his fellow, than he is a hater of his Creator; and no more *necessarily* at war with the one than with the other.]*

I have said that there are indications that peace will in fact prevail, and become the permanent condition of mankind.

If the existence of any future war between two nations depended upon the free and fair expression of the will of the people who composed them, there is little reason to believe there would be another public war. Men seldom voluntarily act against

*The part enclosed in brackets was not delivered, on account of the length of the Address.

their own interest and happiness. But the world is yet full of bad governments. The maxim, that government was made for the people, and not the people for the government, is admitted in but few countries ; or if admitted, in theory, is not allowed its full practical operation. Amid nations constituted and ruled as they are, what rational ground of belief is there, that wars will cease ?

In the first place, many of the most prolific causes or sources of war have, by the progress of improvement and civilization, ceased to exist. That whole class of wars, which may be denominated *religious* or *ecclesiastical*, and which at various periods during the whole christian era, have distressed, depopulated, and disgraced the christian world, have vanished before the spirit of toleration. The unnatural and unholy union of temporal and spiritual dominion, the cause of many bloody wars, is at an end. The fetters of the church are broken ; and the eighteenth century has left nothing in the shape of religious intolerance, or religious superstition and tyranny, which can excite or become the occasion of future wars.

Again ; the age of *territorial* wars, we may hope, has also passed away. The discovery of the new world was a most important event in the history of human affairs. The spirit of that age was despotic, bigoted, ignorant, anti-commercial, and feudal.—The ambition of princes was excited by the display of vast regions of unoccupied territory. The avarice of both princes and nobles was stimulated by powerful descriptions of stores of wealth, not the

less exhaustless, because unexplored. In short, that event, acting upon the peculiar qualities and passions of the age, laid the foundation of a series of territorial wars, which continued, with short intervals, until the establishment of the independence of this country. But there are now no new worlds to discover. Every corner of the earth has been inspected by the light of science. Territorial lines are generally fixed and known, and the boundaries of nations established; where they are not so, and any dispute or doubt exists, they are now settled, as we hope ere long to see every point of national dispute settled, by commissioners or umpirage.

Further; the hope, too, that the fruitful source of another class of destructive wars is dried up and closed for ever, is perhaps not too sanguine to be indulged. I mean wars of *ambition*. The present age has seen a war originating in far other views and objects, but assuming this character in its progress,—a war of frightful extent and desolation, terminated by the disgrace and consequent death of its leader. This war has been followed by a periodical convention of the sovereigns of the principal countries of Europe, and their ministers. At these meetings the great and leading interests of the European family of nations are discussed and deliberated upon, with the professed and declared intention of preserving the peace of society. This is an institution entirely of modern origin. It has no parallel in the history of nations. What effect the establishment of this high tribunal of nations will have upon human affairs generally, remains for time to

disclose. It would be rashness to prophesy. Whatever may be its tendencies in other points of view, one great, and, may I not add, happy effect, seems obviously to flow from it, that of terminating for ever wars of individual, unprincipled ambition. If, however, instead of a holy alliance for the preservation of social order and the peace of the world, it should prove the strong hold of despotic power,—an unholy combination to preserve the privileges of the few, against the rights of the many,—it may be the occasion of one war, more furious, desolating, and terrible, than any which has yet existed among men.—The friends of peace, who are also the friends of rational liberty, look with anxiety for the development.

If these views are correct, if there are no grounds for any future wars growing out of religious abuses, if national disputes respecting territorial jurisdiction are by the wisdom of modern times settled by compromise, or no longer exist, if, more than all, ambition's ladder is broken down, and that spirit, which could regret that there were no more nations left to conquer, is at length tamed or controlled, we may indeed hope, that the temple of Janus will be permanently closed, and peace visit the nations.

But there are other and more striking indications of the prevalence of peace.

The universality of commerce, and the consequent distribution of wealth, among all the classes which compose modern communities, has created a great and powerful interest, essentially opposed to wars. The times are not far back, for they belong to

modern Europe, when the whole of society was composed of but two classes,—the feudal chiefs and their vassals ; in other words, captains and their soldiers. The very construction of society was military ; its whole occupation military. The only acknowledged reciprocal right and duty, was that of command and obedience. The wonder is, not that such a state of things should produce wars, but why they were not continual ; that there should have been enough of peace to have taught mankind its blessings. This constitution of society, literally embracing the whole of modern Europe, continued for ages and centuries. There was but one productive art, that of agriculture, connected with it. This was indeed a humble art, and apparently existed only, because men must be fed, to fight. Into this rugged and iron-bound state of the world, the spirit of commerce insinuated itself. Industry and economy became social virtues. Legislation changed its objects. The occupations of men from being warlike became pacific ; and the whole aspect of society has been changed. When it is considered that this great, and growing, and permanent interest is pacific in its origin, character, and influence, and what it has accomplished even in the course of the last half century, it is not perhaps too much to say, that it forms a decisive indication that peace will finally prevail.

The advancement of another great pacific interest within the period I have just considered, is too great to be overlooked, and too auspicious not to be noticed among the causes leading to a final termin-

ation of war. The interest of agriculture is essentially a virtuous and pacific interest. By far the largest proportion of the population of the earth is, and has been devoted to agricultural pursuits. Numerous as have always been the sons of the soil, they have had, till lately, no political existence. The spirit of the feudal polity viewed them as villians and slaves. The age of chivalry, which succeeded, did nothing for them. Dwelling in the country, and scattered over a large extent of territory, they had no common points of meeting, no concentration of power and influence. There are no agricultural cities. They had no representative, and, of course, no standing at courts. Held in a state of toil, servitude, and ignorance, they formed a kind of *caste*, quite as distinct and difficult to be broken as those of modern India. From this state of degradation, they have been gradually ascending, until the art of agriculture has become an honourable employment. Men of rank, worth, and science engage in the pursuit. Governments extend not protection merely, but patronage to this now mighty interest. Agricultural anniversaries and festivals, where the great men of the earth meet and mingle with the cultivators of the soil, are substituting for the celebration of military eras. This happy change affords earnest that the day is not far distant, when rewards and honours, proceeding from the use of the ploughshare and pruning hook, will be worn with more pride and grace, than those derived from the exercise of the sword and the spear.

Commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, considered as the great and leading interests of the many, are the growth of modern times. They are essentially the friends of peace. They have taken the place of tyrannical commercial monopolies, the villanage of the feudal system, and the false and visionary pursuits of chivalry ; all which were the interests of the few, and in their nature friends and promoters of war.

But the *minds* of men have passed through even a greater change than their interests ; more marked, decisive, and auspicious in its tendency to abolish the custom of war. If the intellectual and moral condition of society, one century since, is considered in contrast with that condition at the present hour, is there any period in the records of time which can testify to so great an improvement ? Many of the sciences have had their origin within the last century. The science of political economy, which teaches the "raising of the greatest quantity of happiness out of a given territory," is the growth of modern times. This science, comprehending in it the theory of government, well understood, and thoroughly reduced to practice, would alone put an end to public war. The whole circle of moral duties have been investigated and displayed. Able and elegant writers have taught political and moral truth to all classes. Where lately were to be seen mere machines, to be impelled in any direction by the holder of the master wire, are now found men capable of examining causes and judging of consequences, and who will do so. To what but the progress of knowledge

and its consequent diffusion, are to be attributed the many favourable changes and improvements of our times ? What, but this, has caused the discontinuance of many barbarous rites, and abolished many foolish, ridiculous, and cruel customs ? Where, now, are the long continued monastic establishments,—the holy wars,—the bloody tournaments of chivalry,—the wager of battel,—the fires of persecution,—and the horrors of the slave trade ? What, but this, has redeemed christianity from the deformities of error, superstition, and bigotry,—and restored it to the purity and simplicity with which it now addresses the heart, as its consoler and guide ? What, but the diffusion of knowledge, has provided, by a natural and happy reaction, the means of education and mental improvement, and placed them within the reach of the poorest and humblest individuals of society ? It is this, which establishes asylums, endows hospitals and colleges, and organizes the whole of society in the form of corporations and associations, to embody and concentrate human efforts, in effecting the purposes of moral good, and checking the progress of moral evil ; and it is this, which indicates with unerring certainty, that the period is not remote when the history of human virtues will be read with more interest than the account of human crimes ; when the memoirs of the philanthropist, the christian, and the sage will take place and precedence of the annals of those distinguished only for the exercise of the arts of violence and war.

There is nothing, however, which so decidedly marks the benignant influence growing out of the

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general dissemination of knowledge, as the power which *public opinion* has acquired over the conduct of arbitrary rulers. Princes decide upon the leading measures of their governments, without consulting many of their subjects. The advisers of the crown are more likely to consult the passions, caprices, and vices of him who wears it, than to represent the feelings, sentiments, and interests of the people.— In governments thus constituted, it has always been a favorite and leading object to disclose as little as possible, of the views and plans of rulers. In France, how long is it, since a single letter sheet contained all the information of the complicated concerns of a great empire, which was daily allowed to come to the eyes of the whole people of Paris? and this comprising little else than a detail of the locomotions of the prince—and the transfers of power near his person. Amid such total political darkness, the solemn question of peace and war could, and would be decided, with as little inquiry, on the part of the people, as fear of responsibility on the part of the prince. This dark day is ended. The spirit of inquiry has gone forth. It is at work in the most despotic governments. Princes know it. They are gradually, though reluctantly, conforming to it. They feel the necessity of speaking to their people through the press. It is necessary to make known the grounds of important decisions, to give reasons for important measures. Their disputes with other countries are made known; the points of difference publicly stated. They negotiate and publish the negotiation, with their justificatory reasons. A case must be made out in the view of the nation.

The dispute must be national, not personal. The appeal must be made to the nation, on the justice and necessity of a war ; and not to the nation merely, but the opinion of the christian and civilized world must now be respected. The interests of science and of commerce have become so identified with social order, and the peace of the world so much the common property of all nations, that no single nation dares compromit them, without attempting to conciliate, in form at least, the opinion of the world. What though a powerful prince may have expressed the vandal wish, that he wanted obedient subjects rather than learned men ? It proves only that the mind of the royal speaker is already under the most salutary fear of learning ; that he knows full well that knowledge is power ; and that he must and does respect the opinions of his learned subjects.

Our own country affords a most interesting example to illustrate the power, which knowledge and public opinion possess in preventing the recurrence of war. Our independent history embraces a period of forty years,—years, too, of more political ferment, civil commotions, revolutions, and wars, among nations, than mark the like number, in the whole range of history. During this period, we have had but one war, and that of less than three years' duration.—Perhaps—the proudest triumph of that war (triumphant as it was in the opinion of its friends) is the deep and thorough conviction it has left, of the uselessness of all wars ;—the choicest victory it achieved, (victorious as it was) was the conquest it made over the spirit of war itself.



learned and pious men are, as it were in a moment, made known throughout Christendom ; and the light of truth and knowledge, by means of the press, is poured out, like that from the fountain of day, in a broad and steady stream upon all the abodes of men.

After all, is not war purely the effect of ignorance—ignorance of government—of the political, civil, religious, natural rights of men ? Is it not ignorance of some kind, which can tolerate so great a curse even for an hour ? If it can be shown that no good ever come of it ; that it has caused evil—and that continually ; that it is unreasonable, unnatural, without necessity ; against all the interests of man, both temporal and spiritual ; destructive of his happiness here, and his hopes of happiness hereafter ; “that its ways lead down to the chambers of death, and its steps take hold on hell ;” what more can be necessary, than to attack it in its strong hold ? Dispel this ignorance, and the abominable delusion will vanish for ever.

This task, gentlemen of the MASSACHUSETTS PEACE SOCIETY, is yours, in common with the wise and good men of every country. The means are before you—the dissemination of truth and knowledge, by means of the press. If governments are deaf to the calls of duty, and cannot be reached by instruction, begin with the people—and with the people’s children. Of the labor and expense bestowed in upholding the delusion you would destroy, what proportion, think you, it would take, to establish peace on earth and good will to men ? You must prevail, for it is written, that all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword.

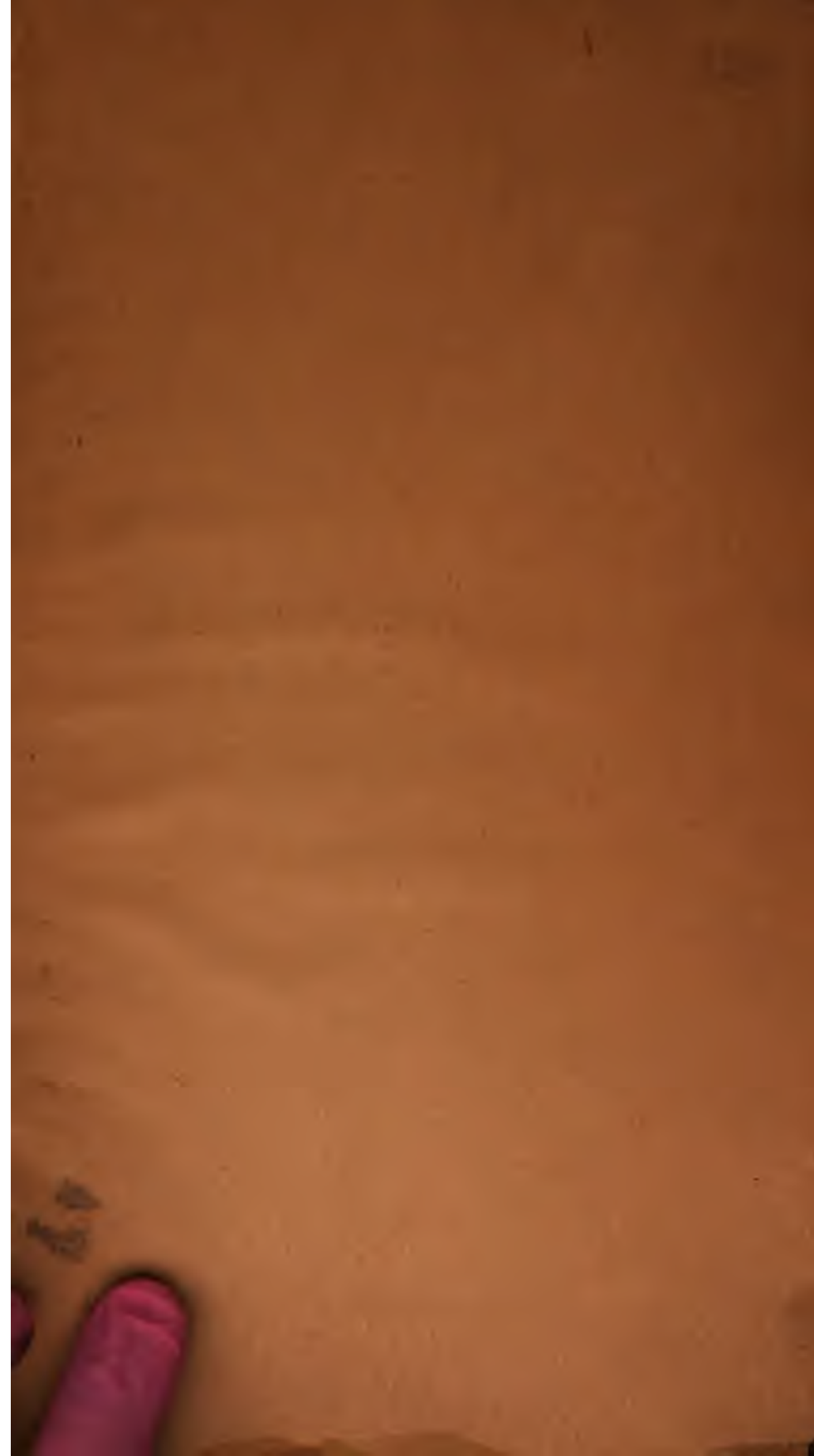
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